

Last week, this House passed legislation that will end a GI Bill disparity between the National Guard and Reserve members so that every single servicemember can access the benefits their sacrifices have earned.

And last month, President Biden signed the REMOTE Act into law to extend legislation to protect student benefits for veterans.

In southern Nevada alone, 200 veterans were facing cuts in their benefits, but with our votes in the House and Senate and President Biden's signature, those benefits were extended, and it was just that easy.

These are just a few examples of the bipartisan wins this Congress has been able to accomplish for veterans.

You see, a lot of legislation before us, especially bills that serve our veterans, are common sense. And I encourage Washington to not lose sight of those two words: Common sense.

HONORING SURVIVORS AND FAMILIES OF FORMER HOSTAGES OF THE IRAN HOSTAGE CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BACON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BACON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to call upon my fellow Members of Congress to support H.R. 1179, which will award the Congressional Gold Medal to the survivors of the Iran hostage crisis and to the families of the former hostages who are, sadly, no longer with us.

Over 40 years ago, in November of 1979, protests in the Iranian capital of Tehran led to crowds storming the United States Embassy and taking the staff inside as hostages. Fifty-two Americans, made up of both civilian and military personnel, were made prisoners in our own embassy and became victims of a terrorist attack upon international law.

For over a year, the hostages were denied their basic human dignity with their captors inflicting upon them increasing physical and psychological torture, to include simulated executions. Madam Speaker, they would take these hostages and go through the motions of being executed, often pulling the trigger of an empty gun to instill fear. It was wrong. These brave Americans held strong throughout their harrowing ordeal, never once losing faith in each other or that they may return home to their families again. Their courage and patriotism are an inspiration to all of us today, just as it was to our Nation 40 years ago.

Through diplomatic success, all 52 of the hostages were released in January of 1981, free to return home to their loved ones and their country, with this January 20 marking the 41st anniversary of their freedom. Despite that, many of them have not recovered from their trauma; to this day still haunted by what they had to endure. Alongside having to carry these burdens for over

40 years, these 52 heroes never received proper recognition from their government for the sacrifices they were forced to make in captivity. They are true American heroes, and it is time that Congress acknowledges them as such, which is why I call upon my colleagues to support H.R. 1179. The awarding of the Congressional Gold Medal to the survivors and the families of the deceased will not only bring justice to these patriots, but also demonstrate this Nation's commitment to protect those whose human rights would be violated.

This bipartisan bill is a symbol of our Nation's ability to come together to honor our heroes; currently there are 145 cosponsors of this bill with a near even split between Democrats and Republicans.

Additionally, I would like to thank the tremendous efforts of Commission 52 for helping to spread awareness of this bill and gathering support for it. Their commitment to righting the wrongs of over 40 years ago is an inspiration to all.

HONORING WANDA YOUNG

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. TLAIB) for 5 minutes.

Ms. TLAIB. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the late Wanda Young, former singer of the renowned Motown Marvelettes and resident of the Inkster community in Michigan's 13th District Strong.

Ms. Young made her mark on Motown when she was asked to join the local singing group comprised of many of the Inkster High School students and alumni.

The group, now known as the Marvelettes, was quickly signed to the Tamla record label, later known as Motown Records.

They earned Motown one of its biggest hits with "Please, Mr. Postman."

Wanda Young sang lead on many of the recordings including the hit, "Don't Mess Around with Bill."

Ms. Young was an integral part of the Motown music scene and defining sound of the 1960s.

Ms. Young's example has inspired countless women and African American performers across our country.

Please join me in recognizing Wanda Young's contributions to our Nation and Michigan's 13th District Strong as we honor her legacy at home and across the globe.

RECOGNIZING MICHELLE MARTINEZ

Ms. TLAIB. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Michelle Martinez, Detroit resident and environmental justice warrior from Michigan's 13th District Strong as she departs as executive director from the Michigan Environmental Justice Coalition.

For many years, Michelle has been a pillar of our community, advocating for clean air and water, and fighting against environmental racism that hurts our neighbors' quality of life.

Michelle has worked tirelessly, and I firsthand saw this myself, for various organizations over the last 15 years and has never wavered in seeking justice for the people who live with the effects of pollution.

I worked closely with Michelle on a number of initiatives when I served in the Michigan State legislature, and she has been an amazing person to watch grow as an advocate and leader in our State.

Michelle has always taken a bold approach to making transformative change for our communities that is meaningful and has never shied away from a challenge.

So please join me in recognizing Michelle Martinez' outstanding contributions to the communities of Michigan's 13th Congressional District as we wish her well on her next venture.

CONGRESS HAS A CLEAR MANDATE TO PROTECT, RESTORE, AND EXPAND VOTING RIGHTS IN AMERICA

Ms. TLAIB. Madam Speaker, I rise today to make clear that we, as Representatives of the people, have a clear mandate to protect, restore, and expand voting rights in our Nation.

In my hometown of Detroit, election workers and community members were intimidated, shouted at, and disrespected for simply counting the votes of our community, a majority Black community, in November of 2020.

People banged on the windows, Madam Speaker, on the counting room just because they didn't want Black and Brown votes to be counted.

Our community was treated like we were unworthy of making our voices heard at the ballot box.

This should not be so complicated.

If our colleagues in the Senate fail to pass the Freedom to Vote: John R. Lewis Act, their inaction will send a clear message to folks that voter suppression is okay. Voter suppression is not okay. It simply is not. Intimidating our election workers is not okay. Inaction is not an option, and we must deliver for the people.

AN ATTACK ON ELECTION INTEGRITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, House Democrats this past week passed a bill to nationalize elections. On a party-line vote Democrats, led by Speaker PELOSI, passed a bill nationalizing elections in an attempt to maintain power.

If ultimately enacted, this would consolidate power and control of all elections in the hands of Speaker PELOSI and the Democratic Party.

This bill is an attack on election integrity.

Their claims of voter suppression could not be further from the truth. The 2020 election had the highest turnout in 120 years.

A poll by Pew Research Center found that 94 percent of those asked said it was easy to vote. Thankfully there appears to be no path to get the votes needed to pass this danger to democracy bill in the Senate.

MARCH FOR LIFE IS A CELEBRATION OF LIFE

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, later this week, tens of thousands of Americans will travel to D.C. to take part in the 48th March for Life.

They will not be alone. Across the country, Americans will march to their State capitals in protest of the Roe v. Wade decision.

This march is a celebration of life. It is a march full of joy. It is inspiring, it is peaceful, and it is welcoming to all who wish to attend.

Today, it continues to be the largest annual human rights demonstration in the world. The goal is simple, to celebrate life with the hope that one day we live in a world where every life is celebrated, valued, and protected.

This year's theme is equality begins in the womb. As Jeanne Mancini, president of the March of Life said best, "As our country continues to advance along the path to a more just society, we cannot ignore the discrimination that is taking place against vulnerable unborn babies. . . ."

In the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson penned three unalienable rights, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

As Members of Congress, it is our job to uphold those rights.

Since coming to Congress in 2009, I am proud to be a strong proponent of standing for life and giving a voice to the voiceless.

Many of my colleagues have introduced legislation to advance the pro-life cause. I am proud to cosponsor many of these bills, including the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act, the Defund Planned Parenthood Act, the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act, the Sanctity of Human Life Act, the Protecting the Dignity of the Unborn Children Act, and the Life at Conception Act.

In addition, I proudly stand on this House floor advocating for these policies and thwarting any attacks on the unborn.

Madam Speaker, our country is at a turning point. Right now we are experiencing the most pro-abortion administration in our history.

For the first time in over four decades, Democrats removed the Hyde amendment from legislation. This amendment is a bipartisan agreement which prevents direct taxpayer funding of abortion and is supported by 77 percent of Americans.

As pro-abortion advocates continue to try to stifle one of our unalienable rights, I know this House will continue to work tirelessly at the Federal level to put the health and safety of women and children first.

As long as the cloud of abortion looms over our country, we must con-

tinue to be the shining light for those who cannot defend themselves.

Now I am proud of the brave women, men, and children who will travel to Washington this week.

We must always be a voice for the voiceless. And we must continue to build a culture that values life and respects mothers and their children.

Ahead of this year's march, I stand here and redouble my commitment to protecting the most vulnerable among us, the unborn.

□ 1045

ADDRESSING YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. UNDERWOOD) for 5 minutes.

Ms. UNDERWOOD. Madam Speaker, the trauma, disruption, stress, and isolation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly accelerated the mental health crisis facing our young people. I have seen this reflected in my own community. My alma mater, Neuqua Valley High School in Naperville, Illinois, has lost two students to suicide just this school year.

These are not isolated events. We are seeing the impacts of the youth mental health crisis play out in schools and communities across my district and across the Nation. Lurie Children's Hospital in Chicago has seen the number of children admitted as a result of suicide attempts increase from two to three children per month to two to three per day. There are now 3,000 children on their waitlist for outpatient mental healthcare. This is absolutely heartbreaking.

However, I find hope in seeing young people in my community stand up in the face of tragedy and demand solutions from their schools and government officials. They shouldn't have to do this, but they are organizing, participating in school board meetings, and writing and calling my office. I want them to know that I hear them, and I am fighting for them.

This summer, I introduced the Child Suicide Prevention and Lethal Means Safety Act to invest in educating healthcare providers and evidence-based youth suicide prevention measures. It is absolutely critical that we act immediately to address the growing unmet need for more school-based mental health providers.

That is why I am fighting for the maximum possible funding through the Department of Education for the school-based mental health workforce in the omnibus appropriations package. I am inviting all Members to join this bipartisan effort.

Last month, I was proud to join Assistant Speaker KATHERINE CLARK to introduce the Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Act to provide consistent, long-term funding to support schools in hiring more school-based mental health providers and

meet the recommended student-to-provider ratios.

As we begin another year of fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, we must target resources toward supporting the mental health of kids in school. As U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy warned in his recent advisory on youth mental health: "It would be a tragedy if we beat back one public health crisis only to allow another to grow in its place."

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues in both the House and Senate to work together and across the aisle to pass legislation, including a fiscal year 2022 spending package, that makes necessary investments in combating the mental health crisis facing young people.

We must seize this critical opportunity to build better, safer, and more supportive environments for our young people to grow and thrive.

UNDERSTANDING PRESIDENT BIDEN'S FAILURES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. MCCLAIN) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MCCLAIN. Madam Speaker, I rise today because I need this Congress to understand the failures of President Biden as our Nation's Commander in Chief.

This administration was handed the reins to a country that had an economy that was ready to bounce back after pandemic restrictions, a southern border that was more secure than any other point in our Nation's history, and a foreign policy that had us respected around the globe. Instead of simply being a caretaker, who ran on being a unifying force—and I want to say that again; he ran on being a unifying force—this President chose to play politics of division from day one and began dismantling all the positive policies of President Trump.

In January 2021, the President halted construction of the border wall and overturned countless immigration policies that clearly worked. These policies stopped dangerous caravans from bringing thousands of illegal aliens to our southern border. These policies protected thousands of illegals from the horrors of human trafficking, and these policies kept not only our country's borders safe but the community of the entire world safe as well.

In this President's first year, he chose to spend trillions of American tax dollars on COVID relief. He spent those dollars on the backs of our children and grandchildren when there was nearly a trillion dollars from previous relief packages still unspent.

This wasteful spending that has included payments to keep people from working has led to our Nation's supply chain disaster and the highest inflation in nearly 40 years, not to mention the labor shortage that we are facing now.